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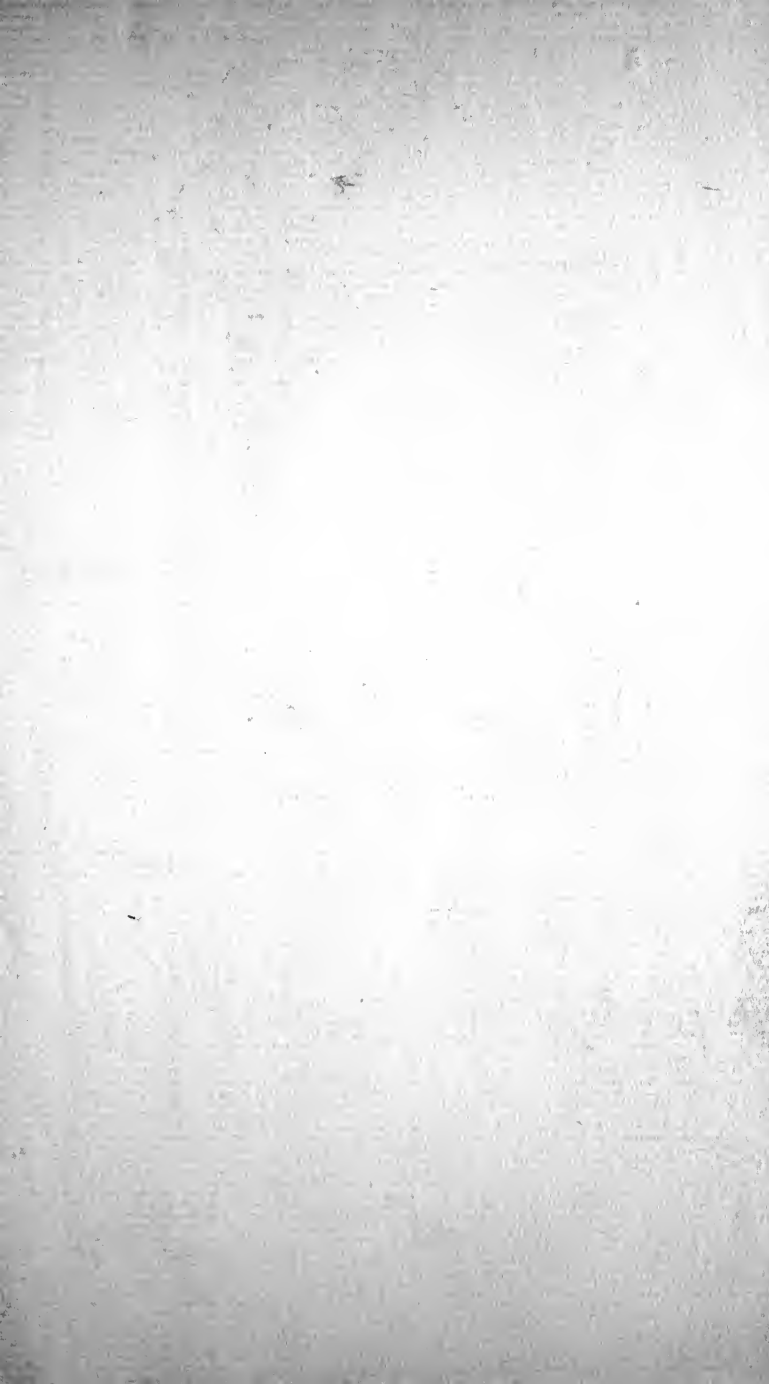
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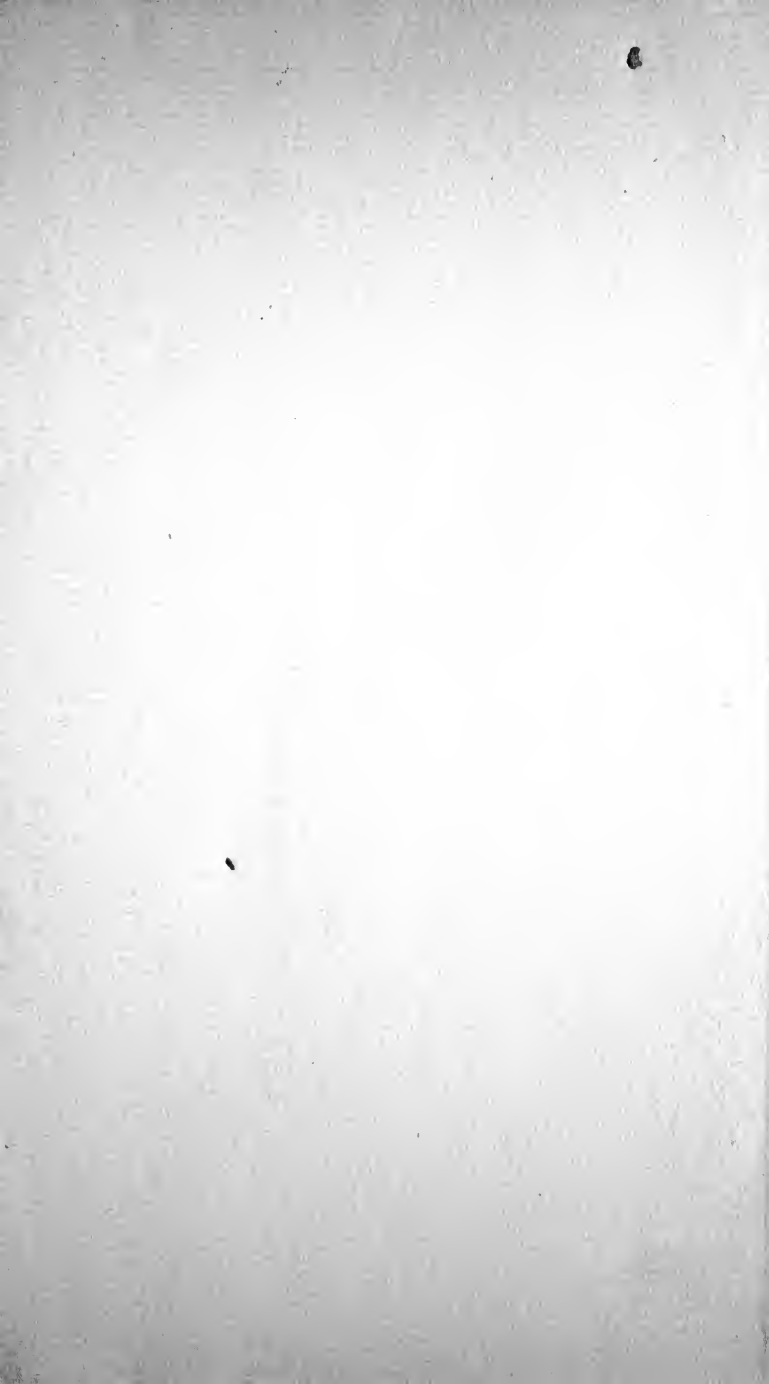
LOVE AND LIFE
AND OTHER STUDIES

By ALFRED KREYMBORG



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**LOVE AND LIFE
AND OTHER STUDIES**

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LOVE AND LIFE

AND OTHER STUDIES

BY
ALFRED KREYMBORG



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AUTHOR

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By ALFRED KREYMBORG

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LOVE AND LIFE

LOVE AND LIFE

SCENE:—*A huge sterile bluff, shrouded in the shadowy gray of twilight. Reaching from its foot to the distant horizon, the great black sea of Death. The awfulness of Solitude reigning supreme; not even the sigh of a love-sick breeze to break the gruesome monotony. Still clouds overhead. . . .*

Two ghosts appear upon the bluff: formless apparitions that pierce the gossamer-like gloom of gathering darkness. Two voices penetrate the silence: the one, a clear intonation like the soothing sweetness of a bell; the other, a strident discord of rough power. The voice of the spirit of Human Love and the voice of the spirit of Human Life.

Love.—Life! Let us turn back ere it be too late!

Life.—No! We have come to court the welcome form of Death and we shall stay to feel his clinging embrace.

Love.—Oh, inexorable partner and master! Why such fearful haste? Can we not wait? Can we not hold but for the time that a godly genius breathes his soul into his creations: a painter, his soul into a harmony of color; a poet, his soul into beauty of verse and of thought; a musician, his soul into a concord of tones?

LOVE AND LIFE

Life.—No! Thou feelest an art-creation to be but a short movement of the hand upon the dial of time; while in reality, it breathes forth the spirit of eternity. I, Life, am but the plaything of the Creator, to be extinguished at His will. Art is God's expression of beauty, sounded by the voice of a genius, and is therefore everlasting. Thou askest me to hold for the space of an art-creation? Never! I should have to breathe longer than mine own existence.

Love.—Alas! How cold and relentless thy words! Yet, let me play upon thy memory with gentle persuasive touch, and learn whether it will not give forth that response and sympathy which the pipe of the dreamy faun intones. The prattling song of the brook,—as innocent and as free from sorrow-bequeathment as the play of a child-world—the sweet fragrance of the flower-land,—as soothing as the vision-powers of incense—the sighs of great trees of the forest, which seem to murmur so fraternally to the sighs of the human heart: “Does the companionship of thy great world leave thee only sad and solitary? . . .” do none of these chords touch thy memory? Thou hast loved Nature and her numberless children. Does the song of the brook, the fragrance of the flowers, and the sighing of forest trees live with thee only so short a time? See how the trees beckon and smile to us through the gathering gloom! Let us desist, for the moment, from these thoughts of Death!

Life.—No, no, again and again, no! Love: Thou art as old as humanity, but thou art still as young in thought

LOVE AND LIFE

as thou art in thy ever-blossoming. Thou speakest as though these forms were new and ephemeral. Nothing strange is born to Nature. All that thou seest was, and is only the repetition of itself from some previous generation. The three forms that thou didst touch upon are not a matter of the present alone, but of the past and of the future as well. No! We cannot stay Death. To wait for Nature would be to prolong existence. Nature was, before me; and will be, after me. Come, prepare thyself!

Love.—Ah, Life! Let me not plead with thee in vain! At least, permit affection to stay thy cruel desire. Cease thy storming for the instant, that lovers may steal together to whisper the melodious phrases that interpret the song of their hearts! Let their sunshine part thy sombre clouds; thy clouds would then dissolve into tears of joy!

Life.—No! We cannot stop for an instant, for that instant were an infinitude. More than ever, no! Thou earthly Love: the Divine love, of which thou wert born and art the agent, and of which thou hast planted the seed in lovers' hearts, is greater than I, greater than thou and greater than Nature. Nature was born before me and will live after me; Art arose after me but will continue to live after Death welcomes me; Divine love, however, sprang from God, is God, and will exist after all else has perished. Leave off further pleading! With each of thy fancies thou givest me greater assurance that my Day has come. No more! I yearn for Death, who awaits us there below.

LOVE AND LIFE

Love.—Oh, that terrible black sea! In the name of Divinity, resign thy awful wish! See how the waters grow more and more hideous until the eye loses its vision beyond that black horizon!

Life.—Thou speakest so of the blackness of that welcome sea? What is it compared with the blackness of the heart of the world? That sea is white in purity against the blackness of the universe's treachery. Yea! I name it treachery,—that concern of self which is the Idea of the world and its thanks for existence.

Love.—Think, Life, how thou hast fanned me with the warmth of thy being and how, in return, I have melted the cold of thy loneliness! Let us back to the world, for there below, in that fearful darkness, cold must reign supreme; it would change thy soul into a phantom and my spirit into forgetfulness.

Life.—And what of the coldness of the world? Has the world ever been aught to us but the incarnation of its own egotism? I have given the world myself; thou hast offered it thyself. What return has been made for our sacrifices? The world curses me for its existence, its misery; and brands thee as the Lust which forces the continuation of the race. What a sardonic paradox: I am stoned as thy birth-giver, while thou art censured as my preserver! They love their pleasures but not me; they live for all but for thee.

Love.—Life: Art thou just? Were there not a multitude of beings who loved thee and lived for me? Are there not a myriad of creatures who love thee and live for me, and will there not always be such mortals?

LOVE AND LIFE

Thou didst refer to the remainder when thou spakest so harshly of the world. Why is it thus with them? May I warn thee, Life? An Inner Voice whispers to me in accents of gentle command: "Hast thou fulfilled thy duty?" Think, Life!

Life.—We have finished our work. I have given the world its opportunity; thou hast been its Ideal. Our work is indeed over.

Love.—Is our work completed? Thou speakest like a laborer whose only concern is the hours he may happen to be employed in slavery. Is his day done when his hands cease to ply their trade? Has he not a home to brighten? Is he not like the star that casts upon the blackness of night its lustrous ray of helpfulness? Thou speakest of our duty as though our duty ended with ourselves. Have we not our light to bequeath?

Life.—We have done all that spirits may, and all is as it was in the beginning. The world has never advanced.

Love.—What an answer: "The world has never advanced!" Have we not work ahead of us then? Granted, that the world has been an eternal zero in the scale of progress, would it not be worth another thousand years' labor to be able to advance that scale but a degree? Thou saidst the world is treacherous egotism and icy thanklessness. Are we concerned with thanks? Did Christ heed buffets or beg for thanks? Here are we, like two beggars, with hats in hand, going from door to door knocking for sympathy. Cease thy begging, Life! Do we deserve thanks, we will receive them; but

LOVE AND LIFE

it would needs be in another existence. We do not merit God's smile. No! Not while we determine upon Death, like cowards that flee from Truth to hide underneath the cloak of Hypocrisy!

Life.—Love: Thou movest me. Thy voice is like the soothing breath of spring that inspires the weary soul of the traveller with gladness and strength. Dispel my doubts! Thou knowest our Sphinx's riddle. How solve it?

Love.—Life: Thou art all-knowing. Thou hast visited all humanity. Thou knowest kings and beggars, wise men and fools, rich and poor, happy and miserable. Thou hast breathed upon all. Many have been the times that I have accompanied thee. Many have been the hearts I have kindled: Eves, Cleopatras, Helens, Juliets, Rosalinds, Marguerites. And, as I have inspired them to love, so have they been loved in return. Yet, in thy manifold wanderings, Life, thou hast often neglected me; thou didst fail to take me with thee. How numberless are those that thou hast told me of that I have never visited: all of them the personification of misery and of Death! There are millions upon millions I have never known. Can you not take me to them? Seek them all out, Life! And let us not falter until thou hast found them, one and all, that I may whisper into their hearts!

Life.—Exquisite spirit! Thou firest me with an extinguishable flame of ambition. Thou shalt have thy desire. Rest shall never behold me until I have unearthed every stone that covers a cold heart. Yea,

LOVE AND LIFE

I know them all: from the poor, miserable, Hell-driven wretch in his hovel, to the cold, vain, lordly possessor of millions; but thou shalt know them too! Ah, how thy light has shattered my blindness! What a picture do I see, what a transplendent vision, a heavenly harmony of tone: All-man loving all-woman, all-woman loving all-man! I see them now, figures of stooping leprosy; but I can see them hence, beautiful symbols: smiles incarnate. Let us away at once!

Love.—Stay but a moment more, Life, that I may draw thee a picture in delicate and simple outlines! . . . Canst thou see that fair vista, formed by two rows of tall, stately trees? See how they meet overhead in a gentle and dignified embrace! And note the quiet of the green vault, the protecting shades, and the irregular effusions of God's Light glinting through the foliage above! That vista is the road of Purity, its end, Elysium. . . . Find thy sufferers, Life, and with the happy ones, I will lead them thither that they may mingle in that Restfulness! Let them find absolution in that pathway of Godliness, peopled only with those great spirits whose faces are turned ever toward the Light!

Life.—Ah, Love, Woman: Emblem of Light and Salvation! Through thee may I hope for the Light of God. Lead me! Teach me to look upward through all pain, through all sorrow, through all doubt! Teach me to have Faith!

The apparitions disappear. A golden light breaks from the heavens. All is enveloped by its protecting mantle.

REALISM AND IDEALISM

HAVE you ever had occasion to be swallowed up by one of New York's great business throngs? If so, you will be able to sympathize with me in the curious predicament into which I was forced while dodging along Broadway one afternoon.

I was on my way home. Coming and going, a vast crowd of people were hurrying by me. And on no countenance could I discover any sign to indicate that that individual had ever known a peaceful moment. Indeed, the whole crowd seemed possessed with some inner devil, so anxiously did they all hasten onward. Accustomed as I was to this picture of nervous organization, I would have gone on my way in my usual apathetic state of mind but for an unlooked-for circumstance. An inner voice, very startling in its unexpectedness, had aroused me as from a dream. So commanding were the accents in which the voice addressed me, that I became transformed in short order into one under a spell:

“Listen, thou being of flesh and blood! Toward what culmination are those creatures heading? Can the spirit of Realism which overshadows them, and which hangs over their souls like some sentencing pall, be truth? Does life and its destiny mean nothing to those slaves but materialism? Beware, godling, lest

REALISM AND IDEALISM

thou become one of that pack! They are nothing more than so many cattle, driven back and forth at the will of masters. Miserable cattle! They have not even an instinct of resistance, so accustomed have they become to eating and drinking from the hand of beneficent commercialism. Can this be the price of living?

“Money, Money, thou seducer of souls and instrument of Hell! Dost thou alone deal out cards of contentment? Is happiness only accorded by a scale of multiplying wealth? Will time always record a race for thee, Money? No, no! The truth cannot live with thee, Money, or among thy proselytes: that mass of scrambling beings there. Thou canst not be a be all nor an end all. Thou hast not the power to justify nor to judge. Thou canst not be man’s Ideal? (And what an Ideal! To be rich, what is it? Will not millionaires die as well as rats? What have they then? Vermin will eat their flesh.) Nay, Money! Thou art as contemptible as thy worshippers. Thou and thy followers are fit for nothingness.

“Godling: Beware of Realism and beware of the emblem of Realism, money! There is that in this world which is greater than either: Idealism. Great men and women have lived in the Ideal. Alexander, Cæsar and Lincoln were Idealists, and likewise, Jeanne d’Arc. That they were at all successful in their undertakings is attributable to their faith in their standard. Emulate their example! Fight under the standards of Idealism and your life will be one whirlpool of joy. Compared to such a life, what are struggles and sorrows, pains

REALISM AND IDEALISM

and pleasures, scrambling after money, adulation or success? Nothing, nothing, a thousand times nothing! Bend thy knee, godling, and swear allegiance to Idealism!"

Utterly bewildered as a result of the conflicting sensations aroused within me by the words the strange voice had whispered to me, I hurried along the street as though gliding on air. My surroundings became completely lost upon me. I felt no longer like a being of this earth, but dreamed of casting lots with souls of a higher world. Absolutely under the spell of the magic words, I had instantly become metamorphosized from the realist of my former self into an Idealist. Dream chased dream through my now feverish brain; vow succeeded vow in my will. However, my beautiful vision-life was not for long. I had scarcely had time to breathe in the ecstasy of my new existence, when a second voice addressed me. This voice, instead of being strong and inspiring like the first, was soft and tantalizing. Its words were few; its meaning, veiled:

“Humanity, humanity: Take fair warning!
Time will plant a seed of dawning.
Idealists, idealists: Be more real
And realists, realists, more ideal.”

“ HAPPINESS ”

ALMOST every day, you may see the laborer,—and thousands of his kind—on his way to work. On his face there is an image of Doom, the image of Doom which is the imprint left by the perpetual Hell of his daily routine. At night, you may see the same laborer returning homeward, the image of Doom now partly hidden by a trace of Sunshine:—the man is to have the evening to himself.

And how does the laborer spend his evening? Perhaps in the company of wife and children, with whom he has often tasted an hour or two of bliss, in drinking at a near-by saloon, or in going to some place of amusement where he has frequently found a means of passing the time. And this hour or two of bliss, this hour or two of drinking, or this hour or two of pastime, the laborer calls “Happiness.” What a mockery!

The next morning, the all-powerful hand of Fate draws aside the Sunshine which had partly hidden from view the image of Doom the night before. And again, you may see the laborer on his way to work.

THE THIEF

ONE day, I witnessed a scene which created an impression on my mind that has not been impaired by the lapse of time since intervening. I had chanced to be strolling along one of the less frequented streets of New York,—not in search of anything in particular—when my eye became transfixed by a sight wholly new to me. Right ahead of me was a baker's show-window and in the show-window was set forth a tempting array of corn cakes, some of which were covered with a coating of vanilla and the rest with a coating of chocolate cream. What did I see nearly hidden away among the cakes but a mouse! Nibble, nibble, nibble,—how the little fellow was helping himself! What a picture of gluttony was here presented!

The mouse must have arrived upon the scene of temptation but a moment or so before myself, for only one of the cakes had been disturbed and that but a little. Fascinated by the sight of the animal's occupation and wondering what the probable outcome of the whole affair would be, I stood there perplexed by two conflicting dreads: a dread that the mouse be scared away before he could reach a state of satiation and a dread that the proprietor might feel the loss of so many cakes, should the mouse damage them all.

At this point in the progress of events, a man, who

THE THIEF

had been standing near me, entered the bakery. A moment later, I could see that some sort of a consultation was being held in the rear of the place. Shortly after, the stranger came out of the store, while the proprietor disappeared from view.

Of a sudden, something happened! To my horror, a large well-fed-looking cat appeared in the show-window. There was a scampering of feet, a jump, and all was over. The cat disappeared as suddenly as she had appeared.

Fickle misguiding Fate! How could you have smiled so one moment only to have frowned the next? Is it not possible that our mouse had been starving for several days? Why then did you place temptation and the prospect of a goodly never-to-be-forgotten feast before his nose but to deceive and to kill? You might have delayed the end somewhat longer if only to have allowed room for a little more pleasure in the little fellow's life.

JOY

HAIL! Hail! Hail great Joy! God-given, Olympian, all-conquering Joy, who dost to-day exalt me with thy fire! Oh! thou who hast consumed me: If there be great, greater and grèatest blessings in God, may He from the grèatest select a boon, in coronation of thy kingship and in thus making me thy subject. Unhappy, miserable, Hell-driven slave that I was, I can smile with pity and with sympathy upon mine old self, once captive to the agents of Satan and now a proud retainer of thee, great Joy! Oh! for a pæan from thousand-throated brasses, oh! for an epic from laurel-crowned poets, oh! for some panorama from vision-inspired painters, to immortalize thee, great king! Then, let me but thy standard-bearer be, and we will march into the field to drive from thence mine enemies: those fiends that are as devastating as vermin of the earth, as insects of the trees and shrubbery, and as terrible as monsters of the forests and of the seas.

Behold, great king, the army that is advancing upon me! Dost thou recognize them? They are my life-enemies, now spread out in parade and celebration. Ah! too well do I know them! Dost thou see amongst the advance-guard that palsy-shaking wretch with horrible distorted face? That is Fear, who has so often dragged me in chains and driven Courage from my

JOY

side. Canst thou see in the next rank that skulking thing that nervously shifts its glance from side to side? That is Doubt, who has so frequently cast me into thralldom and frightened Trust from my presence. That miserable, hobbling creature following is Despair, who, time and again, has crushed gentle Hope beneath mine eyes. The meagre, doleful being that comes after, with slow fateful step, is Sadness. He is the being who has scared a laughter-loving youth from my companionship. Who has not loved the dear fellow: Happiness? In the succeeding rank, thou mayest catch sight of a tottering, gray-haired creature, who stops now and then, only to go ahead again. He is Hesitation, who has so repeatedly driven from me mine old trustworthy ally, Assurance. Two of my greatest enemies, walking side by side, are in the last rank. Canst thou see them: the melancholy fellow with head hung low, and his neighbor, that cringing, fawning dandy with smile on face? The one is Shame, the other, Hypocrisy. Truth, my greatest and strongest friend, fearless fighter though he be, had to give way incessantly before those two creatures, who, egged on by Cain-like Respectability, have taken me, one by my right hand, the other by my left, and have led me according to their desire. A parade of hideous beings, is it not, great king?

Ah! thou liftest thy trumpet to thy lips! Thou givest a signal: Advance upon mine enemies? Blow! Blow! I am ready. Come faithful allies! Come Courage, Trust and the rest! On, on! Slash and slay, give no quarter, strike until all are dead! All bloodshed if

JOY

needs be! Fight, fight! Ah! I feel the strength of an hundred Herculese. . . . What! Is all over? Yea! Look about thee, great Joy! The whole army, one and all, have been annihilated. Thanksgiving be unto thee who hast inspired me and hast brought mine allies to mine assistance, Joy, Joy, King of kings!

Come, come great world! Come, come, one and all of ye, whosoe'er ye be! Gather together under the banner of Joy and arm yourselves to crush your enemies! Ye too know the creatures who strove against me. Ye too have suffered and have bled under their thralldom. Come, come, one and all of ye, follow the great king and wipe all slavery out of existence! For once in your history, let "Strength" be written across the breadth of the earth, so that the great word reach down into every hole and crevice, up into the heights, through forests, across seas, into every space where beats the heart of mortal; and may each heart be enkindled into an unquenchable fire of attainment! Then, may all souls send up one universal shout and one unending call for God's greatest blessing in coronation of thy kingship in thus making all mankind thy subjects, Joy, Joy, oh! King of kings!

DESTINY

THERE is Divinity in all things. Ocean, man and stone are possessed of Divinity.

One day, I gazed out upon the ocean in the grandeur of its calm. (Another day, the calm had vanished and a magnificent turbulence reigned instead.) I asked myself: Wherefore?

Walking through a lonely thoroughfare one afternoon, I passed a man whose face bore traces of some misfortune and who came along as though weighed down by pressure of age. (Later, I passed a man who must have been uplifted by some hidden joy, so bright was his face and so springy, his step.) I asked myself: Wherefore?

Another time, I chanced to be spending a day of leisure roaming about in a valley, when my fancy became attracted to a huge rocky mountain that stretched far above me. (A moment later, fatigued by the strain of continually looking upward, I went on my way; there, not far ahead, innumerable pebbles lay scattered about.) I asked myself: Wherefore?

And each time I had asked myself: Wherefore?—the answer had come: Destiny!

UNSELFISHNESS

YOU women who Love: Hearken unto one who hath felt within him Life's continual ebb and tide,—despair and hope! From time immemorial, we Men-kind, despite our vaunted knowledge and wisdom, have done naught but grope through existence. We have insisted vaingloriously that there is some path of true living, a path that we will discover. Nevertheless, we have hesitated and still hesitate at every obstacle, more and more doubtful of a discovery and farther and farther from Truth, to which we have referred so often and so boastingly.

You alone have Instinct. What we think and surmise, you feel. You know something of our present Life: a life incarnate of Selfishness. Ah! how different from your Life! What to us is the most difficult of professions is to you the simplest, for, through your God-given Instinct you have learned that Life means Unselfishness.

In return for the little we can give you: love, worship, reverence or fame, grant us this much: Teach us Unselfishness! And when we are slow to learn, when the Selfishness the world has taught us asserts itself over the Unselfishness we are trying to acquire, have patience with us!

JUDGMENT

THE thought of it still burned my soul: Had my life been a useless one? My life: one great desire and thus far, a contemptible unattainment; my life: one vast sea of hope and after all, but an empty cavern of realization! What hand had to do with this, that so promising a seed should have been planted but to have grown up a shriveled weed: useless, undesirable and unknown to posterity? Hadst Thou to do with this, All-seeing One, or did I guide my soul into such oblivion? Am I not to learn from Thee now, whose was the fault, who was my guide, or must I be mine own judge and mine own prisoner? Is not my soul to be aided in freeing its fetters, or is it always to be alone: helpless and vacillating? . . . Ah! I am powerless. I cannot think nor cannot be judge on mine own acts. My tongue cannot speak now.

Miserable Tongue! How quick wert thou to pass judgment upon others; how ever ready wert thou with thy law for others, relentless in condemning! Canst thou not speak now? Dost thou leave me although thou wert ever ready to attend upon others; or art thou afraid lest in judging me thou thyself wilt be judged? Tell me! Judge now! What is my life? Can it be condemned? Can it be praised? . . . Thou dost hesitate. Ah! thou knowest thy law but canst not apply it. Pooh!

JUDGMENT

thou petty institution of learning, that knowest but to repeat parrot-wise! Speak! Why was I put here and why have I lived thus long? Have I served some purpose in living thus, some purpose of mine own, or of the world or of God? Speak, thou judge of others!

The baying of a distant hound was all that greeted the midnight silence and the turmoil of my soul. The howling was prolonged and agonizing. Of a sudden, it ceased, and then. . . .

And then, there fell upon my ear a sound, faint and unrecognizable. Gradually, the sound became more and more distinct, until at last it was intelligible. Footsteps were coming from somewhere in the distance! I arighted myself in bed and listened. The steps were measured as the fate-like beating of the heart. As they drew more and more nigh the steps became more and more pronounced, and as they passed directly beneath my window they were strong and commanding. With the same regular resounding beat, they continued their way, growing fainter—fainter—fainter, until at last, they were no more. Darkness and silence once more held their sway, and the footsteps. . . . ? Where had they gone?

CONTENTMENT

THE family were on their way to the cemetery, where, but a short time before, they had buried their greatest treasure. On the faces of two of the party, husband and wife, abstracted sorrow and weariness were imprinted. The third member, a child, rested in the arms of the woman. The little one was asleep.

All about them, in the car and out on the street, noises predominated in dissonant confusion. Within, voices mingled, some of them light and gay, others earnest and tale-bearing. Without, carts rattled by, car-bells clanged, hucksters shouted their wares. Notwithstanding all this life of sound, there was one who heard not, but lived alone.

Among the throng, without and within, there was a display of color. Green, purple, orange, in fact all mentionable tones, clashed in a life of inharmonious colors. Yet, there was one who saw not this life of color, but lived alone.

And over all the confusion of noises and voices, and over all the inharmonious clash of colors, the spirit of Discontent presided. Yet, one there was who felt it not, but lived alone: namely, the child.

Arrived at the grave, the husband and wife bowed down before the invisible in humble fear and comfortless sorrow. Songs of crickets and distant sounds,

CONTENTMENT

faint and mysterious, vied with the dirge within the souls of the mourners. Flowers, withered and cheerless, drooped their heads in resignation. Yet, there were two who heard not and saw not, but lived together.

TO SCANDAL

SCANDAL: What a life of wondrous joy must thou enjoy! Favorite mistress of that wonderful masculine, Society; living with him by day, going to bed with him at night, what must thy pleasures be! For he is a truly splendid fellow, oh! Scandal. Accomplished, many-sided, sweet-voiced and full of pretty words, what a companion were he for anyone and how enviable is thy lot in having such a one for thy paramour!

But what can Society find in thee, dear Scandal? Believe me, even though I swear it not on the Bible, on the Talmud, on the Koran,—such handy works to swear by—believe me, I say, that it grieves me deeply to have to confess to thee that thou art not attractive in mine eyes. I know thou desirest to be loved as other feminines do, but I really cannot bring myself to loving thee. Ah! how I would love thee if I could love thee for an hour! But I cannot come to it, Scandal dear, I simply cannot. I know thou art sensitive; I know that even the words of such as I may hurt thee. But thou wouldst not have me speak other than the truth? No, by all means, no.

Thou art really very old and very commonplace, Scandal, thou happy mistress of Society. Believe me, thou art really very commonplace. It is hard for me

TO SCANDAL

to say it, I confess: you always wear the same guise to me, the same dress, the same painted face, the same manner, but I must say it. How then can you appeal to me, oh! Scandal? Should not a loved one be ever-growing in her charms to her lover; should he not love her in some new way every day? How then can I love thee, Scandal dear? I have an affection for thee, I swear it. I have a sort of admiration for thee too. As for loving thee, do not require it of me, beloved of thy paramour! I can learn to praise thee, I can learn to advertise thy fame, great and ancient as it is, but I cannot learn to love thee.

A REMEMBRANCE

TO have Lived: to have known love,—mother's, wife's, friend's—to have known joy and sorrow, hope and doubt, success and defeat; to have Lived to have known and to have felt that which all from time immemorial have known and have felt, that which you and I have known and have felt, that which the sons and daughters of future generations will know and will feel: namely, Life and the living of Life—and then, suddenly and unawares, to have all this cut short by a bullet. . . . What does it all signify?

The Confederate Monument,—Hollywood Cemetery,
Richmond, Va., August 24th, 1907.

THE NUDE

THE Nude is the form in which Nature creates. Trees are nude forms; butterflies are nude forms; snow is a nude form. Of all Nature's creations, the only one that has not maintained his original appearance is Man. Man invented clothes. And, although Man is a created being, like the tree, the butterfly and snow, his present general appearance is not his real physical appearance. He has therefore, at one and the same time, a real physique and a sham physique. No amount of clothing, however, can hide from the higher powers the fact that Man is a Nude.

As in Man's physical life, so in Man's spiritual life, there is a nude and a sham living. The nude existence is the living of Truth; the sham existence, an appearance of the living of Truth. A man may be a regular attendant at church services, may give the appearance of being a devout worshipper and yet, be false in his inner life. Another may be the subject for severe criticism, may be denounced as an enemy to mankind and notwithstanding, be a man of Truth in reality. For no amount of sham living can hide from the higher powers the true living.

The Nude and the Sham are now what they were

THE NUDE

centuries and centuries ago. Races may come and races may go; customs may come and customs may go. But the Nude will always be the nude; the Truth will always be the truth.

LAUGHTER

WHEN one hears the great world laugh it seems as though someone had awakened from a nightmare to laugh for a moment only to sink back into his horrible dream. How rare is a laugh, a real laugh: a laugh from the heart! The sound echoes and re-echoes upon the great silence and then dies like all expression of joy and like all hours of happiness. And thenceforth, the great silence rules once more, as in the past, and as it always will rule: to be interrupted by some laugh and to be interrupted many and many a time by laughter, only to rule inevitably and supremely and until infinitude itself be no more.

Ah! that I were some immortal mountebank, with the earth and the sky and the seas for my theatre, with the great world as my audience and with all time,—with every hour in infinitude—as my time of performance! How I would gyrate, what contortions would I not go through, into what a fool would I not transform myself,—into a greater fool than I have ever been, into a greater fool than any other mortal has ever been! What jokes would I not crack, what silly riddles would I not propound, what songs would I not sing, what dances would I not dance! If only to make the world laugh and laugh and laugh again. If only to force the world, now and for all time, to lose sight of this great silence, of this great mystery: of this life of ours.

GOOD AND EVIL

A Philosopher and therefore, I say in conclusion, that Good can never come from men of Evil.

A second Philosopher.—And having reached your conclusion, do you once for all condemn men of Evil?

First Philosopher.—Assuredly!

Second Philosopher.—Dear friend: You are wrong and unjust. In the first place, how can you prove that Good can never come from men of Evil? Let us take for example a certain man who is known as a thief. Can you not conceive, setting aside for the moment all that you have learned through Law or from Society, that that thief might have had a wife or a mistress at home toward whom he had felt—through affection or otherwise—a certain duty: the duty to provide for her and to house and clothe her under any circumstance? Such having been the case, might not his crime have been committed in the woman's behalf? There was that much good connected with the man's crime, therefore, and he had that much Good in him. Consider another instance! I once learned of a miser whose whole life was spent in gathering together, for his own selfish satisfaction, a vast fortune at any expense. You would at once designate and condemn him as a man of Evil. That same miser kept and fed a dog in whom was centred all the affection that the man had ever been

GOOD AND EVIL

known to feel for things of this earth. Did not the miser, like the thief, have that much Good in him?

Friend: I fear that you have come to your false conclusion—that of withholding all recognition of the good that may exist in a man of evil—because you did not sound truth in the premises of your argument. Nature herself contains elements of Evil side by side with elements of Good. And as it is with Nature so it is with her innumerable creations. A tree has a growing and a dying element. An apple contains ingredients for ripening and for decaying. And man, whom we so love to designate as Nature's pet creation, is just as vulnerable to decay as are Nature's other creations. The mental man is in no wise different from the physical man, for the mind of man contains like the body of man elements of growth and elements of decay. We like to name these elements of growth in the mental man, the Good in man, and the elements of decay, the Evil in him. Will you not admit, therefore, that each man, no matter who he be, was given a mind containing ingredients for the betterment of his character and containing ingredients for the tearing down of his character? In that case, friend, you will agree with me that no man whom posterity has voiced a man of Good is without the power of doing Evil and that no man who has been condemned as a man of Evil is totally powerless of accomplishing Good. Were this not true the whole scheme of Nature would be false, is it not so?

First Philosopher.—Then how do you account for the Evil actions in the world?

GOOD AND EVIL

Second Philosopher.—Circumstances are to be held more accountable than anything else, for circumstances bring out the Good or the Evil in a man so readily. You call a man a thief when he steals a loaf of bread. Suppose he has been reduced to starvation; has he not been forced into his theft through circumstance? You may admire and reverence another man because he is accomplishing good things in the service of the church. Is not that man's work of doing Good simple when one comprehends the payment thereof, whether it be the blessing of the Lord or the salary paid by the church that he receives? Compare the minister's task with the task of a laborer who has a whole family to support on the little that society allows him, and who is tempted from his duty day in and day out by the thousand and one pitfalls of city life. Is not the temptation of forsaking duty for pleasure harder to resist for one who is down in life than it is for one high up in life? Appreciating this, is not the laborer's sum total of doing Good fundamentally higher than that of the minister? Nevertheless, you would first shower your praise upon the latter, I feel certain. You have only to compare the circumstances of men to understand their actions and then you will not be so hasty with praise and with condemnation.

Friend: You have condemned men of Evil once for all. Do you not see that you were unjust in so doing? No one can be above criticism at all times since we can never know the proportion of Good and of Evil in a man's soul. You may condemn the actions of a man,

GOOD AND EVIL

but not his soul. Man has not the power of a God and should hence refrain from usurping His right. Even the power of judging his own self is beyond man's understanding.

MEMORIES

THE room was small and narrow. The faint light, that stole in through the window, brought gently into relief from the pervading gloom the various objects about the room. Almost directly beneath the window stood a small table and a chair, and on the table, a paste-board box. In a farther corner, a stove had been placed, and against the opposite wall, an old moth-eaten couch. A man was seated on the couch. His elbows were resting on his knees, and his face was hidden in his hands.

Slowly, the man raised his head, clasped his hands between his knees and commenced to gaze abstractedly at the floor. A soft look stole into his eyes, and over his face there soon spread an expression of tenderness. Little by little, the man's whole attitude relaxed into a deep moodiness.

Suddenly, he roused himself and, getting up, started pacing up and down the room. He finally stopped before the table and, leaning over the back of the chair, looked reflectively at the paste-board box. A moment later, the man sat down on the chair and pulled the box toward him, while a touch of sadness came over his face. For a moment, he leaned his elbows upon the table and gazed vacantly past the box. After a while, he shook off his lethargy with evident

MEMORIES

effort and removed the cover from the box. By this action, a considerable quantity of letters was revealed.

The man once more leaned his elbows upon the table. The soft look again stole into his eyes as he passed his hands slowly through the letters. Once more, and little by little, the man's whole attitude softened until he became lost in moodiness as before.

The man aroused himself almost determinedly. Of a sudden, he pushed back his chair and stood up. He quickly replaced the cover and, picking up the box, carried it over to the stove. Hesitating just long enough to open the door of the stove, the man emptied the contents of the box into the fire and threw the box behind the stove. For a moment, there was silence, and then a crackling commenced. Flames burst out here and there until the letters became a general blaze. Gradually, the blaze subsided, the flames growing less and less fierce until at last, only ashes and silence remained. A shadow lingered over the man's face and soon deepened into an expression of gloom. Little by little, this expression passed away until at last, the shadow itself had disappeared.

Deep twilight had spread itself over the room, all of which was in darkness with the exception of one end of the couch, where a soft light still strayed. By this light, one could see the man seated on the couch. His elbows were resting on his knees, and his face was hidden in his hands.

LOVE AND WOMAN

IN the world of feelings, Love is the supreme power. Its place among the realms of the spiritual is as high as is money's rank among the realms of the material world. The man who has not the assistance of money is helpless upon the sea of finance; a king without the magnificence of a court of gold behind him is a nonentity in the diplomatic world. As with the power of money so with the power of Love. The woman who is unable to inspire Love may be likened to a ship without a rudder. However, once give her Love the woman will be transformed into a being of power and that through a force which has no limit to its tremendous sway. Wielding the sceptre of Love, woman gains such strength, that the slave to her influence no longer remains himself.

Love's witchery is inexplicable. It makes fools of wise men and wise men of fools. Men who have been unbelievers learn faith, while men of faith become mystified before this evidence of supernatural power. And is it not another of Nature's strange whims that this God-like influence over men should be exercised by the weaker mortals?

Given a certain amount of courage, we may divide women into four classes: Firstly, into those who love and are loved in return—(Goddesses); secondly, into

LOVE AND WOMAN

those who love without being loved in return—(Angels); thirdly, into those who are loved but love not in return—(Devils); and lastly, into those who love not and are not loved—(merely Women). A goddess has creative powers. She casts light into the darkest heart, inspires the object of her benignity with sterling idealism, gives him hope, strength and courage, and, above all, brings out the god-hood in him. An angel is ever present without being seen. She sacrifices herself in all things, great or small, and frequently goes to the very depths of degradation for the man of her affection. In the latter respect, many a prostitute is an angel. A devil is as all-destructive as a goddess is creative. She has all the powers of Hell at her command. Holiest men have committed crimes in her name; deaths are attributable to her as they are to diseases. A mere woman is as worthy of Love's light as is the goddess. Unfortunately, Fate has not placed opportunity in her path. She is like certain miners, certain workmen, and certain slaves, who may live on and on: never influencing and never influenced. But after all has been written, when we have designated some women goddesses, others angels, other women devils and another class merely women, are they not all in the end, Women?

Doubtless, one could entertain a notion that the dear sex would rebel at any classification of the above nature, just as one might expect beetles to scold zoologists had those insects woman's auxiliary: the tongue. After all, to do them justice, there are probably as many kinds of women as there are women. All we know

LOVE AND WOMAN

them by, one from another, is their influence over our own individual person. And what becomes of reasoning when one appreciates the fact that any woman could be goddess, angel, devil or woman? Chaos! Who, therefore, can explain Love or who decipher woman?

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

WHY do we bury our dead in the country, under trees or under the blue sky of heaven, amid flowers and shrubbery, where peace and contentment hover over all, only to return to our former life: the life of the city? Why do we not likewise bury ourselves in the country, where we could learn to taste of that peace and contentment of which the dead might speak?

TO MY HABITS

DEAR habits: How I love you,—the bad as well as the good! You are more faithful to me than friends, more persistent in loving one than woman; I cannot part with you. Far sooner, oh! World, command me to give up my expectation for future days, far sooner force me to relinquish the few prizes I have won in the past, far sooner require me to resign the luxury of my present poverty, than to ask me to give up the companionship of my dear faithful habits.

How numerous are these friends of mine and how they grow in number day by day! Some have been with me nearly twenty-four years, others only a few days. Well-nigh twenty-four years ago, I made the acquaintance of a habit, of a most excellent habit: to have people wait on me on any and all occasions. (I still know how to make use of this friend, although not as well as formerly.) A few days ago, I made the acquaintance of a habit, of another most excellent habit: to have others lift from my shoulders the work that was meant for me. (How long this friend will stay with me is perhaps doubtful. No doubt, the length of its life depends upon the length of time my Christian-like relief-parties will stand by the duties they have taken from me.) And so more habits come, day by day, al-

TO MY HABITS

though many an old habit may be forced to depart at the same time.

How sad it is,—how cruel, in fact—that some of my friends must go! I yearn to keep them all with me and for all time; I pray for more and more to join me. Yes, I love you, dear faithful habits. You are such a solace to me, such trusty ever-ready companions. With you, I am happy, without you, miserable. Long may you live; hosannas to your memory, you good noble friends!

TRUE SIGHT

THE soul of every mortal possesses Sight, either True or False. In each soul there is a lighthouse and before each lighthouse there stretches the illimitable sea of Destiny. The beacon in the lighthouse of False Sight flickers continually, but the beacon in the lighthouse of True Sight is a glorious steady light.

The rays from the beacon of True Sight gently play upon the waves of Destiny. How serenely unchangeable the course of the rays despite the seeming inconsistency of the waves! May the beacon in the lighthouse of True Sight grow brighter and brighter so that the rays may extend farther and farther upon the sea of Destiny, until at last no wave remain unhidden from a transplendency of deliverance!

HEART AND SOUL

ONCE upon a time, I had the good fortune of witnessing a drama which, even to the present day, has left a lasting impression upon me. The drama had so close a connection with my state of mind at the time, that the whole incident is still fresh within my memory.

I had been taking a stroll through the lower east side section of New York in an endeavor to drown all recollection of a struggle under whose weight I had been suffering. A problem had been forced upon me in which my heart and my soul were both concerned,—and concerned one against the other. The problem was one that had demanded immediate solution, a solution indispensable toward making my life a sufferable one, but often as I had tried I had been unable to bring myself to a conclusion from which some attempt to grasp the situation might have been made. Well-nigh worn down, physically as well as mentally, by the alternate sway of heart and of soul over my actions, I had strolled down to the squalid part of the city in the hope of finding relief from my inner struggle in the amusement of exploring.

I had been totally unsuccessful in my experiment for some time when my eye had been attracted by an electric sign that was hung over the entrance of a dirty-looking theatre. On the sign was the title: "Princess

HEART AND SOUL

Myrrha." What fate impelled me to enter the theatre I am powerless to explain. That I was to find the key to the solution of my own problem inside that dirty-looking play-house may seem preposterous. Nevertheless, such was the case. At every hand, Fate discovers means of exerting its marvellously mysterious powers.

The drama once under full swing, I had become completely absorbed in the unfolding of the plot thereof. Although the story itself was as old as those in the Bible and as simple as a fairy-tale, I had soon lost all recollection of my heart and soul struggle in following the life-stories of the characters in the drama. Such was the situation that had presented itself: The princess Myrrha and a youth were in love with each other but their difference in rank was so great that their love had to be hidden from the world. The fate which guided the procession of events that followed decreed that the princess, who was the only daughter of the king and queen of Ramona, should marry the prince of a powerful neighboring monarchy. Under the surveillance of her father's and of her confessor's eyes, and in great fear lest her love for the peasant youth be discovered, the miserable daughter of majesty could do no better than to submit to the royal will. The customary marriage ceremonies and the procession before the populace followed. During the latter, a note was stealthily dropped at the feet of the princess. The ceremonies and the procession over, the princess repaired to her chamber, where she opened the missive. The missive

HEART AND SOUL

contained a renunciation of love from her lover. . . . The final act of the play disclosed the princess in the abyss of her self-abasement. Seated on a low stool, and rocking herself to and fro in her misery, the girl presented a picture of isolation. She had relied upon a final endeavor to free herself from her dilemma: namely, by sending for her confessor, in whom she had always placed trust and confidence. He alone, therefore, had the power to release her. When the confessor entered the princess' chamber, the girl prostrated herself before him in supplication.

It was at this point in the unfolding of the drama that I roused myself from the stupor into which I had been cast. As the confessor leaned forward to raise the girl from her kneeling position, I listened intently lest a single word escape me. Was not this struggle of the girl's a struggle like mine: a struggle between heart and soul? The girl was bound to her lover through her heart and to the prince through her soul. How was she to solve her problem?

As the girl finished the recital of her confession, the confessor placed his hands upon her head in benediction. Gazing compassionately into her eyes, he spoke, in slow solemn rhythm and in tones of simple powerful song that burst upon my unconsciousness like the call of a trumpet upon the silence of mountain walls:

"My child! Thine is the struggle of heart and soul. Heed not the usurpation of the heart but follow the prerogative of the soul! Thy heart may err or deceive, thy soul, never. The soul is the home of moral law."

DEATH

DEATH, thou silent partner of Life, translate thyself! Thou who art ever near unto Life; thou who movest at his side by day and by night, all-seeing and unseen: what is thy purpose? Is it but taking Life by the hand, through good and through evil, through light and through darkness, to guide him step by step to the grave; or is it to lead him beyond the grave? Translate thy purpose, or what were better, tell me of this grave! What does it mean? Is it an infinite Sleep: a soft and gentle quieting of Life's life,—Life's pain and joy; or is it an Awakening: a kindly and loving executer of Life's dream,—Life's ambition and hope? Translate thyself or this goal of thine! Ah! Thou art silent? Thou dost refuse me? It is well. I trust thee even so.

Yes, I trust thee even so for thou art the Friend of the universe. Oh! thou fearless one: who heedest not rebuff; whose presence is avoided with dread; whose name is a signal for trembling, and yet, who remainest immutably steadfast in thy purpose and in thy friendship! Oh! thou companion of Life in the grave, and thou companion of the grave in Life: who watchest by all existence and shirkest not the dirt and filth of hovels, nor hesitatest before the sumptuousness of palaces; who

DEATH

shrinkest before naught that hides thy partner, Life, but who art ever steadfast in thy purpose and in thy friendship! Oh! thou who art the one being who never thinkest of Self: whose very soul is assistance and abnegation; who knowest not scandal and slander; who askest not for affection, nor thanks, nor sympathy, but who art still steadfast in thy purpose and in thy friendship! I trust thee. Whether this goal of thine be Sleep, or whether this goal of thine be Awakening, I trust thee. Whether the grave be a soft and gentle quieting of my life: my life of pain and joy,—or whether it be a kindly and loving executer of my dream: my ambition and hope, I trust thee and thou shalt find me ready.

Yes, thou shalt find me ready. Whether with gray ringlets on my brow, or with smile and ruddy cheek and youth accompanying me, thou shalt find me ready. Be it with a sceptre of Fame in my hand, or with a staff of Failure in my grasp; be it with riches on my back, or with poverty as my lot: thou shalt find me ready, for Love. . . . Ah! Dost thou not know Love? See, here at my side, this being of exquisiteness so rare! It is Love. Gaze upon her, for thou must call her too! And remember, Death, that although thou take Love before me, I shall be content; and although thou take me before Love, I shall be content; for wilt thou not join us inseparably in the blissful Sleep or in the golden Awakening? What higher could Hope desire? Nay! Fear not for Love! Love also trusts thee and Love also will be ready. Yes, one is all and all is one to us: whether the grave be a soft and gentle quieting of our

DEATH

life,—our life of pain and joy; or whether the grave be a kindly and loving executer of our dream,—our ambition and hope; we trust thee and thou shalt find us ready.

WORDS

HOW meaningless do words sound once they have passed one's lips! To the world they may convey something, even for many a day, but to him who has expressed them they can convey nothing, as they are merely the expression of some mood or thought.

Words serve as the outlet to or as the alleviation of the something within one that demands expression. How else can words serve him who has spoken them when even the words with which Love is expressed must seem cold to him who has spoken them?

What can be the reason for all this machine-like energy: the expression of man's inner self through words? Can there be an expression of greater things behind this expression of man's self? Or is Nature indifferent to man's expression of self and is this expression mere accident on his part rather than design on Her part? Who knows? Undoubtedly, man, through words, has the power—the incalculable power—of guiding others and of entertaining, instructing or otherwise assisting them. Perhaps this is man's purpose on earth, this the purpose of man's power of speech? A pretty conjecture, at any rate!

Words, words, how readily are you spoken and how readily forgotten! Your power is great, but how short is the life of that greatness. And how much is your

WORDS

destiny, and how much the destiny of your powers, like the destiny and the destiny of the powers of man himself! Therefore, pity us, you words, and we will try to pity you in return!

TO ONE WHO LOVED ME

THERE have been mothers and mothers, and there have been mothers and mothers immortalized by Fame, but what are they all to me, oh! Mother o' mine, when I think of thee! What wert thou not to me, thou more than mother? What didst thou not do for me: how didst thou not watch over me in my childhood, how didst thou not watch over me in my boyhood, how didst thou not watch over me up to the very Last Moment,—oh! that Last Moment! “I want to stay with you. . . .” Those were thy words: “I want to stay with you.” Oh! Christ, what a heart was treasured up in that one sentence,—what a Love, what a Mother!

And to think that all this Love was for me: for me, ungrateful, ungrateful fellow that I have always been! Was I a son to thee? Did I even commence to repay thee for thy Love, for all thy Motherliness? No. . . . I know thou didst not watch over me with the thought of repayment in thy heart,—no, far from that! But even so, I might have been a son to thee; I might have been a son to thee once in a while, at least. Ungratefulness, oh! ungratefulness!

I know that grief, remorse and the vowing of vows avail one but little. I know that what has been done in life is sealed irrevocably with the Past. But hear me,

TO ONE WHO LOVED ME

thou who hast found that Rest among all those silent ones out yonder that thou didst never find near me! I cannot undo what I have done;—yet I know, Mother o' mine, that, wert thou with me at this moment, thou wouldst not have me even try to undo what I have done—but I can try to do now that which I did not accomplish during thy lifetime: I can try to be grateful to those who love me, and to One who loves me, and to such as may love me or may do me kindness in future days. Listen to my prayer, thou who sleepest among all those silent ones out yonder! May the recollection of my ungratefulness to thee teach me not to be ungrateful to those still on earth, and may the memory of thee, Mother o' mine, aid me to keep my vow!

A FLOWER

ONE day, while walking along a woodland path in search of that restful recreation which nature offers one so gratuitously, I chanced to come across a little blue flower hidden away in a dark green nook. The flower smiled up at me in such a confiding way that my heart was touched and I became aware of a feeling of satisfaction with earthly things. The next moment, however, moved by some unaccountable impulse, I stooped over and plucked the flower from its hiding-place. Hardly had I done so than I was seized with anguish. I had wounded the thing that had smiled upon me.

I gazed at the object in my hand and watched its life dying away, a dull pain oppressing my heart. . . . Soon all was over. . . . Little by little, a deep foreboding gloom took possession of me. I realized that some day some hand would reach down to pluck me from life, some hand equally inexplicable in its action but less unsympathetic and self-interested than mine had been.

What was to be done? I would have promised anything to have been allowed to restore the flower to its hiding-place, but all was too late. . . . Too late, too late! Ah! how often have I been forced to hearken to that phrase: "Too late!"—and to its echo: "Too late!"

FATE AND THE MAN

SCENE:—*A small, dingy-looking room. A man is seated at a table. His whole attitude expresses abstractedness.*

(Enter a Spirit,—the Spirit Fate.)

Fate.—Here I am! Why hast thou called me hence?

The man—(starting up).—Ah! thou hast deigned to visit me, great

Fate.—Peace, thou prattler! Thou hast dared to summon me. What is it thou demandest of me? Make haste!

The man—(seating himself).—Great Spirit! . . .

Fate.—Cease thy flattering or I leave thee at once. Keep flattery for others of thy kind, for thou mayest have much occasion to use it. As for me: I want only the truth. Out with it now!

The man.—Know then, Spirit, that I am dissatisfied.

Fate.—Dissatisfied! How so?

The man.—Ah! Spirit of Time! Is it thou who askest: “How so?” Methinks thou shouldst be the last to ask: “How so?”

Fate.—I hear condemnation in thy remark, condemnation of me. What hast thou against me? Speak, man!

FATE AND THE MAN

The man.—Condemnation, because thou holdest knowledge from me. . . . Many and many a time in the Past have I sat here in this miserable hole brooding over that which thou hast ever withheld from me: My Future life. Many and many a sleepless night have I known when I fairly tore my heart out in an endeavor to unearth some sign of that which is yet to come. What will this Future of mine be? Speak, oh! Spirit, I beg of thee! I have had longings, I have had ambition, and I have felt that terrible apprehension which all men must feel or must have felt: that apprehension against meeting with Death ere my longings have chance of fulfillment. Thou knowest what that apprehension must be, all-knowing Spirit. Relieve me of this fearful dread!

Fate.—And who art thou, man, that thou desirest of me to tell thee of that which no man has ever been destined to know: his Future?

The man.—Merely a simpleton, I fear, but a simpleton who hopes at least to be of service to his kind.

Fate.—And dost thou require knowledge of the Future, oh! simpleton, before thou canst bring thyself to assist thy kind?

The man.—To some extent, great Spirit. I am now able to enlist myself in the service of my fellow-men, it is true, but there is work, great Spirit, which I cannot undertake—so great were the task and so much the time that would have to be consumed in the undertaking—until I have had some knowledge of the time on earth still remaining to me.

FATE AND THE MAN

Fate.—Thou hast named thyself well, oh! simpleton. Can man do more than is in his power? Rest content, therefore, should Death be sent to fetch thee to-morrow! Rest content, I say, with that which thou hast accomplished, little though it be, and do all thou canst while breath yet remains to keep thy heart a-beating!

The man.—But how can I feel satisfied with the miserable little that I have accomplished? And more than that, how can I look back upon my life that was, with any peace of mind?

Fate.—Thou hast known Joy.

The man.—And sorrow too.

Fate.—Thou hast known Happiness.

The man.—And disappointment too.

Fate.—Thou hast known Friendship.

The man.—And faithlessness too.

Fate.—Fool, fool, thou triple fool! Thou speakest of faithlessness,—thou, who hast been blessed with as true a friend as any a mortal was ever blessed with—thou, who couldst not even dream of being such a friend as is he who is thy friend! A Loving Heart: is not that his very life? And thou speakest of such as have been unfaithful to thee, ungrateful one! Thou art like the rest of thy kind who prate of serving their fellows.

The man.—Pardon, Spirit! When the memory is full of bitterness and the soul full of self-reproach, it is simple to lose sight for the moment of those who have been kind to one. It is not easy for me to conjure up the happy moments of my Past while the sorrowful

FATE AND THE MAN

moments continue to rush to my mind so readily and without invitation. Can you not understand how one can dread to face a Future life when one's Past has been so full of shattered hopes?

Fate.—Man: thou art a cross-grained ox! Stupidity, I must call thee. Thou hast called the Future an unpromising one and have cited the Past as the basis of thy argument. Thou art indeed to be pitied, man, for such a process of reasoning. Not so very long ago, Love was sent to thee to keep thee companionship. Love, who has stood by thee through all thy trial; Love, who has given thee love without begging love of thee; Love, who has been everything to thee and who has been far more to thee than thou canst ever be to Love! What a creature stands at thy side! And thou canst prate about unpromising futures? Fie, what blindness, what contemptible blindness! How many of thy fellows have such a companion with whom to face the Future you so dread? How many mortals can say to themselves: Ah! I have Love at my side? Not many. And would others be as blind as thee had they thy Love as their help-mate? No. Even I, who have seen so much of mortal stupidity, cowardness and helplessness, can hardly convince myself that another man would cry: "Oh! unpromising Future!"—had he such a Love at his side.

Shame on thee, man! Drive this weakness of thine out of thy miserable soul! Thou hast lost much, I admit:—Mother and mother's love, friends, hopes, promises of fulfillment,—but thou hast not lost every-

FATE AND THE MAN

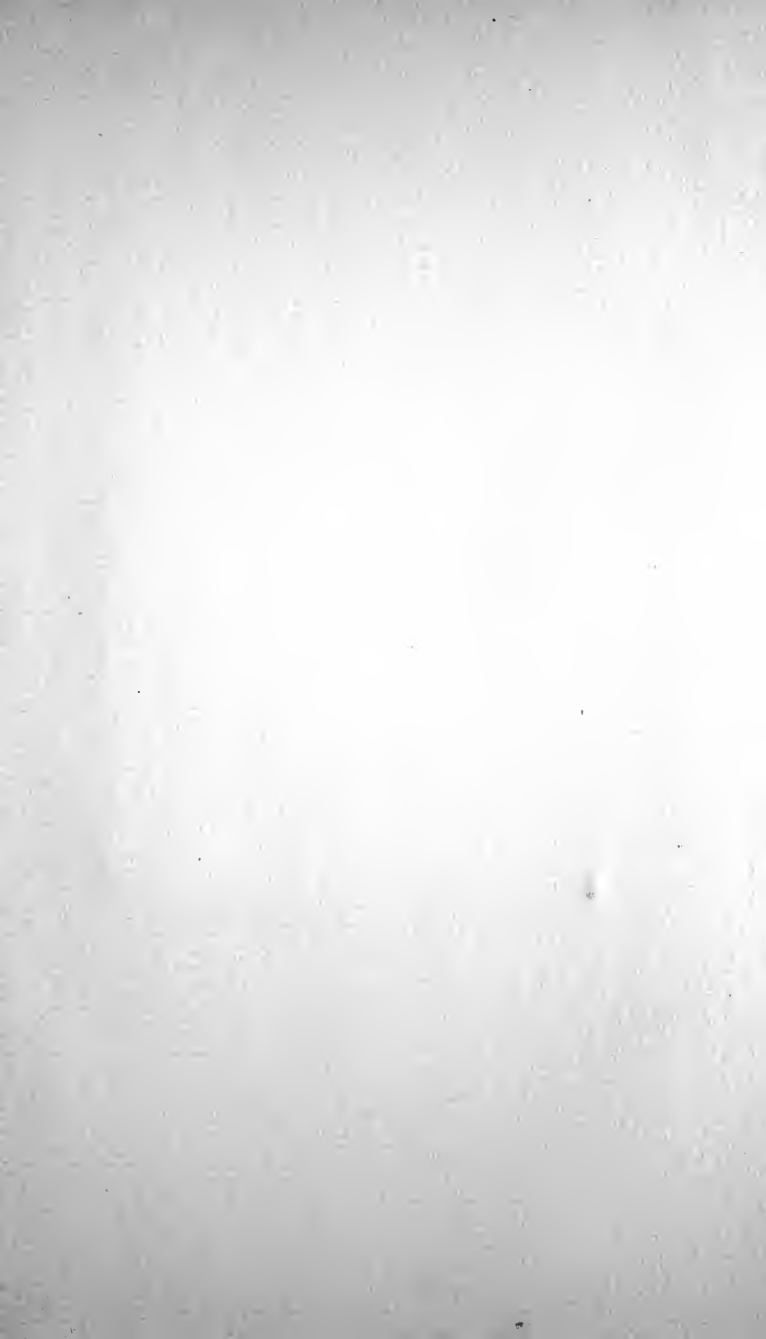
thing. With Love to strengthen thy heart, and with a Friend as thy right arm, what hast thou to fear? Speak no more of the Future, therefore, and if thou still believest in thyself sufficiently to undertake to serve thy fellow man in future days, refer no more to what is Past! Contentment was not meant for man, thou mortal. Therefore, strive not to learn from me what the Future will bring to thee, for All, including thyself, must remain ignorant of that on this earth.

Farewell! Thou didst call me hither to learn that which all mortals have yearned to know, but thou must remain in darkness. I have spoken. Mayest thou never again give way to the weakness thou hast displayed before me, mayest thou never call upon me again. When Death comes to put out the light in thy heart, mayest thou be able to say: "I have done little, but I have done that little faithfully." Farewell!

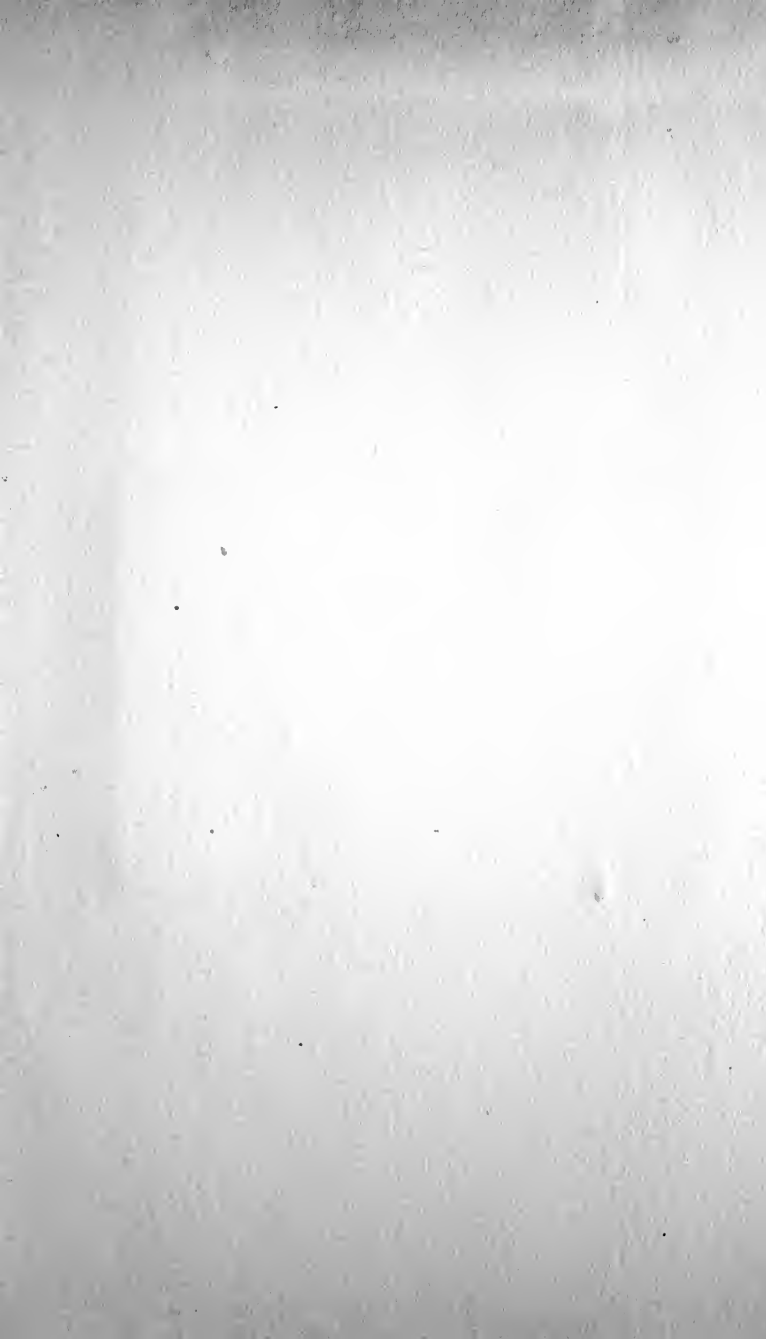
(Fate disappears. The man gazes toward the door, by means of which the Spirit has vanished.)

The man.—Well, Life! So thou art to remain as much a Mystery as ever? Delightful! I wonder whether Death, when he comes, will likewise wear such a guise? At any rate, Fate, despite thy power, there must be One more powerful than thee, since thou couldst not open thy lips as to the Future. And is there a higher power than He? Too bad, Fate, that I did not think to ask thee that!









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